



STAY SAFE MN

# COVID-19 Update

## Safely Adjusting the Dials

Office of Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Flanagan

Wednesday, December 16, 2020

**m** MINNESOTA

# State of the pandemic

## The sun is rising.

- Vaccine has arrived in Minnesota!
- First shipments arrived Monday, and a small number of front-line heroes have already received their first dose.
- Slow ramp up, but the light at the end of the tunnel is much brighter today than the start of this Dial Back.



# Situation update

## In November, the situation was dire.

- Cases were growing exponentially.
- Families were struggling as the pandemic forced schools into distance learning.
- Surge in hospitalizations left hospitals on the brink of catastrophic capacity issues.
- We had to take action to stop the surge.



# What we did in November

## Four-week pause:

- Social gathering
- In-person dining
- Adult and youth sports, fitness centers, and gyms
- Bowling alleys, bingo halls, theaters
- Receptions, private parties, other celebrations
- Outdoor events and entertainment





# We are making progress

**Strong evidence we are starting to turn a corner.**

- As you have before, Minnesotans responded to the call to action.
- COVID-19 continues to spread through our communities at high rates, but case growth is heading in the right direction.
- Hospitals remain quite concerned about capacity, but hospitalizations are down from their high a month ago.



# We're not out of the woods

The virus is widely circulating, and we must keep up our safety efforts.

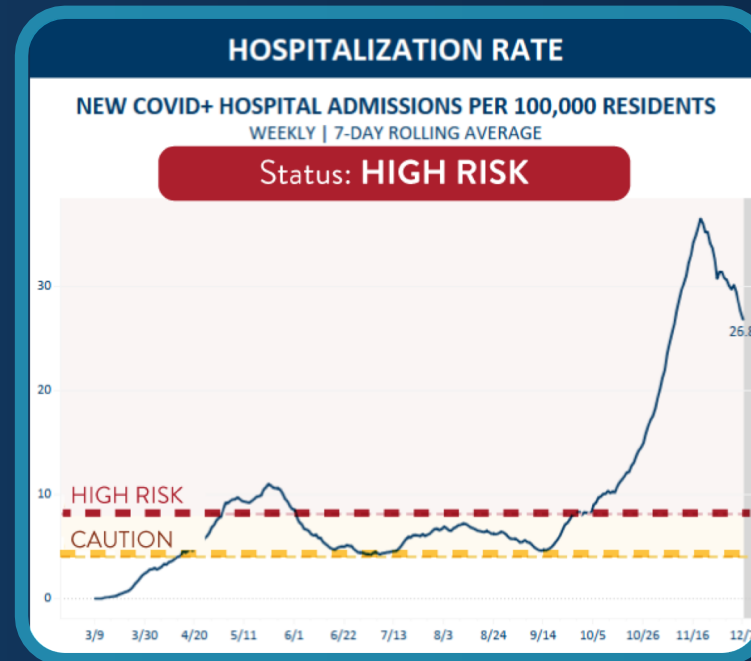
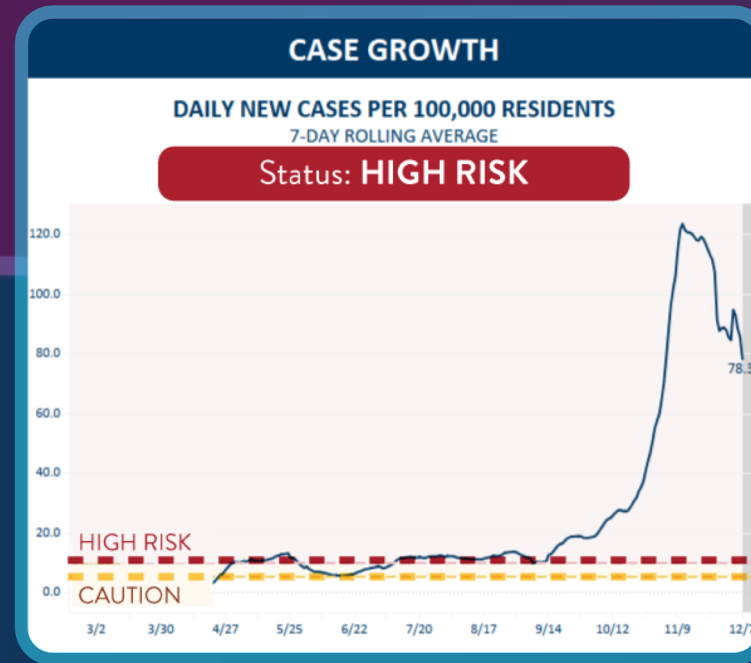


- Community spread continues at high-risk level – too many people are still becoming infected without knowing how.

# Risk measures

Public health risk measures still well above pre-surge levels.

- **Case growth** nearly 8 times higher than over the summer.
- **Hospitals** remain concerned about being able to treat the most critically-ill.
- And **deaths** continue at an alarming rate, and remain significantly higher than we saw over the summer and fall.
- Our dial back helped, but we have to continue the progress.



# Minnesotans have always answered the call

I have asked a lot of you, and you have responded.

**March:** Flatten the curve

- Ramp up PPE, build hospital capacity.

**May:** Manage the virus over the summer

- Prepare schools, expand testing.

**November:** Prevent a hospital surge

- Dial back to slow the spread and protect hospitals.



# Our approach

- Listen to the best advice of the public health experts serving our state.
- Balance controlling the spread of COVID-19, the economy, and the personal well-being of all Minnesotans.
- Protect hospital capacity.
- Prioritize in-person learning, minimize death and long-term health impacts.



# Today: Safely adjusting the dials

## Today:

### Bridge the time until vaccine is widely available

- Support students, families, and well-being.
- Continue efforts to slow spread where the risk is highest and where it is more difficult to reduce risk.
- Protect hospitals and support our frontline heroes.



# Youngest learners return to classroom



## Prioritize in-person learning for our youngest students

- Schools play a critical role in the health, well-being, and education of Minnesota's children.
- Youngest kids are less susceptible to serious complications from COVID-19.
- We have learned how to reduce spread in schools from success in other settings.
- January 18: Every elementary school may choose in-person if they implement certain mitigation strategies.



# Support quality of life

## Small social gatherings

- **Outside:** 3 households, 15 people max
- **Inside:** Recommend no indoor gathering with other households, but if you do:
  - 1 additional household, 10 people max
  - Limit time, wear a mask



## Outdoor events and entertainment

- Outdoor activities permitted
- 25% capacity, 100 people max



# Support quality of life - continued

## Gyms and fitness studios

- Open for individuals workouts at 25% capacity/100 people max.
- Always masked, 12 feet physical distancing.
- Classes begin Jan. 4.



## Youth and adult sports

- Practices may resume January 4.



# Bars, restaurants, and breweries

Bars, restaurants, and breweries remain closed for indoor service until January 11.

We know some – particularly breweries – have invested to make outdoor service possible.

- May open for outdoor service at 50% capacity/100 people max.
- Not a solution but adds an option for some businesses.
- Indoor entertainment venues, event spaces, and similar establishments remain closed until January 11.



# Helping small businesses stay afloat

- Small businesses have made enormous sacrifices during this pandemic for the good of our state.
- Today, I will sign into law \$216 million in direct support for small businesses and workers affected by the pandemic.
  - Direct, targeted aid to keep small businesses afloat
  - Extend unemployment benefits for workers struggling to get by
  - Help families put food on the table.
- Important step in the right direction as we continue to push for federal relief.





# Keeping our hand on the dial

**We have made progress and we are adjusting the dial.**

- But are not out of the woods. We must stay vigilant.
  - Wear a mask.
  - Maintain physical distancing.
  - Avoid large crowds.
  - Download COVIDaware MN app – find out if you’ve been exposed to someone who tests positive.

**If need be, we will dial back again to save lives, but the light at the of the tunnel is bright.**



The background of the slide features a pattern of stylized COVID-19 virus particles. These particles are depicted with a central core and numerous spike-like protrusions. The color of the particles transitions from a bright orange on the left to a deep blue on the right. The largest and most detailed particle is centered in the middle of the frame, while smaller, more faded versions are scattered throughout the background.

# Thank you